

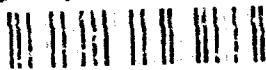
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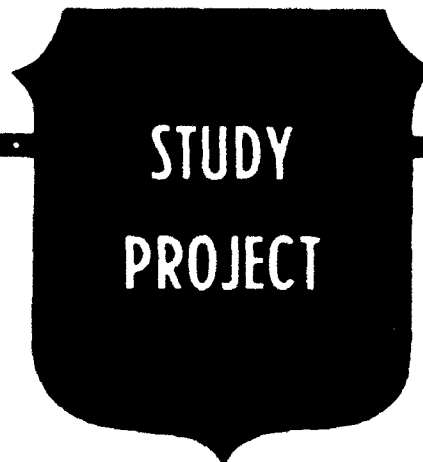
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## WILL JAPAN BECOME A MILITARY SUPERPOWER?

BY

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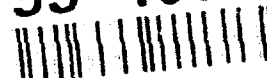
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The world scene has changed dramatically over the past few years and international relationships are still evolving. The old balance of power is gone forever. Nations are coping with the realization they must depend on themselves for security. At the same time, they are having to redefine existing bilateral and multilateral security relationships, or develop new ones. States are focusing on economic development and free-market economies as the way to prosperity. Many are experimenting with democratic principles for the first time and coping with a rise in regional instability caused by the reemergence of nationalism, religious/ethnic rivalry and territorial disputes. As an economic superpower, Japan is viewed by many as a key player in future world affairs to help resolve these conflicts, assist in economic development, and alleviate such problems as proliferation of nuclear weapons technology and degradation of the environment. Japan will be forced to assume a more important role as a full-fledged member of the world community and is in the midst of an internal debate on how it should change to meet the demands of the new world order. Of particular concern is Japan's assumption of a greater military role, especially in light of U.S. force reductions in the region and probable changes to the U.S.-Japan security agreement. There are significant pressures both for and against the expansion of its military strength in concert with its economic might. Japan must defend itself, protect its world-wide interests and increase participation in international affairs as never before. This paper presents pressures for and against Japan assuming a major military role in the future, analyzes that information, and predicts what is likely to happen.

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WILL JAPAN BECOME A MILITARY SUPERPOWER?

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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## INTRODUCTION

Today, Japan stands as one of the world's leading economic powers - an economic superpower. Japan's strength in international economics is clearly demonstrated by the absolute size of its national economy (second only to the United States), its rapid economic growth, large trade surpluses, robust exports of goods and capital, and leadership in international banking. However, the other two pillars of superpower status, political and military power, have not developed to nearly the same extent. Why have these two areas lagged? The answer lies in the fact that Japan has been content to accept a symbiotic, but secondary role to the United States. It has blossomed quite well under the political-military security umbrella of the United States since World War II.

Now that the world has changed with the demise of the Soviet Union and the end of East-West competition, Japan can no longer continue with status quo. Security relationships within the Asia-Pacific region are changing. The end of the Cold War has thrust Japan into a pivotal point in its history, where it is faced with uncertainty and vulnerability. An important debate is taking place within Japan and throughout the international community in defining Japan's role in the "new world order". There are many pressures for and against Japan assuming a greater role in international affairs, especially in relation to a new security role. Currently, Japan remains pacifistic and lightly

armed, but possesses the means, both financial and technological, to support a major military force. Will this major force emerge?

This paper studies the pressures for and against Japan assuming a greater military role in the future - to protect its world-wide national interests and to be a major participant and leader in world affairs. It is partitioned into four main sections: 1) current defense capabilities, 2) pressures for arming, 3) pressures against arming, and 4) analysis and conclusion. The focus of this study is on trends and patterns which might be used to predict Japan's future direction and potential in gaining status as a "military superpower".

#### CURRENT STATE OF JAPAN'S DEFENSE

##### **Japan's Self-Defense Force.**

The population of Japan is 125 million, making it the world's seventh most populous nation.<sup>1</sup> By current statute, Japan's military force must be strictly defensive in nature. Japan possesses a relatively small but highly professional, efficient and well-equipped "self-defense force" for the defense of Japan and its sea lanes out to 1000 nautical miles. Japan has no nuclear weapons and no long-range power projection capability, i.e., aircraft carriers, long-range penetrating bombers, and amphibious forces. Japan maintains no large reserve forces and does not export military equipment. Much of Japan's military equipment is purchased in the U.S. or manufactured in Japan under

co-production arrangements with U.S. defense industry. Japan has limited its defense budget to roughly one percent of its gross national product (GNP)<sup>2</sup>, while the U.S. spends about five percent of its GNP. The symbolic 1.0 percent of GNP defense budget was surpassed twice in the past, in FY 87 and FY 88. The following statistics show that Japan has been quietly growing its defense capability for quite some time.

Japan now has the world's third largest military budget, although considerably less than both the U.S. and Russia. Japan has had 15 years of steady increases in defense spending, averaging over five percent of real growth annually. In 1991, growth was slowed only slightly, to 3.78 percent, due to the end of East-West tensions.<sup>3</sup> Spending increases in the 1991-1995 defense program are projected to average three percent per year.<sup>4</sup>

Total active armed forces number 249,000, with 156,000 in the Army, 44,000 in the Navy and 46,000 in the Air Force. Service is voluntary.<sup>5</sup> The Ground Self-Defense Force has 13 divisions; the Maritime Self-Defense Force has a Fleet Escort Force, the Fleet Air Force (six wings), the Fleet Submarine Force and two minesweeping flotillas; the Air Self-Defense Force consists of three air defense forces and one mixed air division, each of which has its own aircraft control and warning wings.<sup>6</sup>

Japanese Self-Defense Forces are well equipped with the latest hardware. Modernization of all branches is on-going. Significant is the fact that the Maritime Self-Defense Force is developing into one of the world's top six navies<sup>7</sup> and is now one



of the Pacific's largest navies.<sup>8</sup> Japan is developing one of the most advanced antisubmarine warfare systems in the world.<sup>9</sup> In the 1990's Japan is expected to have more ships than the British Navy, and more fighter jets than the U.S. maintains on its own shores.<sup>10</sup>

It is also important to note that Japan is one of the world's major buyers of military equipment, spending an average of about \$25 - \$30 billion annually on its defenses. In FY 92, Japan plans to purchase 92 aircraft, 14 new ships, 26 howitzers, 103 mortars and various other items.<sup>11</sup>

Long-term purchases over the next five years include 42 F-15Js, four AWACS, a considerable quantity of ground to air and ground to ship missile systems, eight AEGIS class destroyers, five conventional powered submarines, 132 main battle tanks, 218 armored vehicles, 716 artillery pieces, 36 Multiple Launch Rocket Systems, and more.<sup>12</sup>

Although there is an anticipated decline in global spending due to the easing of East-West tensions, Japan has made it clear that it has no plans to make any cuts in its basic military budget (and will continue with a modest increase). Japan views the current volatile political and military situation in Asia as being far different from that of Eastern and Western Europe.<sup>13</sup>

So, as can be easily deduced, the Japanese defense capability is not insignificant and future trends are clear - real growth in defense spending will continue at a moderate, steady pace to modernize Japan's armed forces with leading-edge

technology and increasing capability.

#### **Japan's Defense Industry.**

As a subset of being an economic superpower is the fact that Japan is also a technological superpower. Despite Japan's limited production of weapons systems due to the decision of the Japanese government to bar export of arms, its technological capabilities have positioned Japan as a formidable player in the global defense economy. Japanese firms have emerged as world leaders in the design and manufacture of materials, components, and essential subsystems.<sup>14</sup>

Of particular note is that much of Japan's civilian industry technology is extremely valuable to defense industries - so called "dual-use" technologies. Japan's industrial growth has been especially rapid in sectors closely linked to the materials and technologies that enhance the battlefield capabilities of modern weapons: data processing, telecommunications, optoelectronics, light weight materials, etc.<sup>15</sup> In 1984, the United States Defense Science Board concluded that Japanese technology was at or ahead of the most advanced U.S. capabilities in sixteen different dual-use technologies. These technologies were widely acknowledged as the "key" or "base" technologies for advanced manufacturing in the next century.<sup>16</sup>

Japan has the capability to manufacture nearly all of its military equipment. However, its constitutionally-mandated pacifism and regulations forbidding export of war material have

precluded Japan from developing its defense industry to the same level of capability as its other industries. Japanese firms do realize the considerable potential for growth in defense production and have set goals to increase the defense portion of total sales.<sup>17</sup> These sales are to meet Japan's own increasing demand for defense goods and the provision of "components" to U.S. defense industries. If arms export restrictions were lifted, Japanese firms would then be in a position to move into this lucrative, global market. Pressure to expand this sector is also strong because of the recent economic slow-down in other manufacturing sectors. Japanese industry produces aircraft, warships, submarines, engines, vehicles, small arms, missiles, artillery and a variety of electrical equipment. Japan is also making world-class satellites, rockets, radar-jamming equipment, fuselage parts and guided missiles. There are over 1500 major production corporations involved in the manufacture of armaments in Japan and about 70,000 employees. Mitsubishi is Japan's largest defense contractor, picking up 28 percent of all contracts awarded during FY 1990.<sup>18</sup>

Japan also co-produces foreign weapons systems rather than buying them outright. This methodology insures the technology and processes involved are learned at home. For political reasons, Japan has opted to co-develop these new weapons systems primarily with the United States. For example, since 1952, Japanese firms have co-produced 19 different U.S. airplanes and helicopters.<sup>19</sup> Under the 1991-1995 Mid-Term Defense Plan, Japan

will continue acquiring front-line systems which it manufactures under license, such as the P-3C Anti-Submarine Warfare aircraft, the F-15 fighter, the SH-60 and UH-60 helicopters, and the Patriot missile.<sup>20</sup>

Japan has embarked on one of its most ambitious military projects with the U.S. - development of an advanced fighter plane, the FSX (Fighter Support Experimental). General Dynamics is expected to perform about 40 percent of the work on the aircraft while Mitsubishi would pick up the remaining 60 percent. This aircraft will use leading-edge technology. Japan wants to build a total of about 130 to 170 FSX fighters by 1997, but the project is currently in jeopardy due to cost overruns, annoyance over U.S. handling of the cooperative development agreement and congressional concerns over technology transfer.<sup>21</sup> As a sign of the times, the resulting backlash in Japan includes accelerated defense spending in R&D, large-scale development programs to replace imported U.S. hardware with Japanese models, and consideration of a French offer to provide Japan with all the jet fighter technologies the U.S. is withholding.<sup>22</sup> Other areas of cooperative research with the U.S. include developing technology to make submarines less susceptible to undersea detection, designing target-seeking devices for missiles, and researching a new type of highly efficient rocket engine that could be incorporated in missile systems.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, of note is Japan's nuclear energy program. Japan is trying to reduce its dependency on foreign oil by building

nuclear power plants. In January 1993, the freighter Adatsuki Maru, carrying 1.7 tons of weapons grade plutonium, reached Japan after a two-month voyage from France. This is the first of 30 shipments over the next 20 years. Concern exists among Japan's neighbors about their intent.<sup>24</sup> In any case, Japan's nuclear energy program already has 41 commercial power reactors, a pilot reprocessing plant, and an expanding capacity to enrich uranium. These facilities could provide a solid foundation for weapons purposes as well. Estimates from Japanese officials indicate that their country could build a bomb in three months or less. Projections of Japan's nuclear enrichment capacity indicate it would have enough highly enriched uranium for over 300 nuclear weapons by the year 2000 and 10,000 nuclear weapons by 2010, should the need arise.<sup>25</sup> Japan already maintains several military systems capable of delivering nuclear weapons and is procuring or developing others that could provide a variety of future delivery options.

In the short run, Japan's alliance with the U.S. will continue to constrain Japanese defense spending and its military-industrial development. However, Japan will continue its strong position in development of leading-edge technology, especially dual-use technology. Japan will also continue a strong defense research and development program (the fastest growing segment of the defense budget)<sup>26</sup> and expand its defense industry at a steady pace. If Japan's economic, political, or security concerns should significantly change for the worse, Japan's defense

industry has the capability and capacity to rapidly shift emphasis toward a rapid build-up of arms and military equipment.

### **PRESSURES TO MILITARIZE**

#### **World-wide economic interests.**

As an economic superpower, Japan has well established world-wide trade interests and is continuing to invest and expand its influence throughout both industrialized countries and the third world. Under the security umbrella of the United States, Japan has had little fear of interference with its international economic interests and trade initiatives. But will this continue in the future? Or will Japan be forced to reconsider its position and interests as a result of the changing balance of power in the world? During the pre-World War II period, Japan had to make considerable security adjustments due to their economic plight.

As a resource poor island, Japan imports over 99 percent of its oil, natural gas, iron ore, copper, nickel, bauxite, manganese, and titanium.<sup>27</sup> It is in Japan's vital interest to have unimpeded access to raw materials and secure sea lanes to ship the material home for industrial production. In fact, denial of access to minerals, especially oil, was one of the main causes of Japan's aggression in the 1930s and early 1940s. Japan seized Manchuria (1931) and attacked China (1937) seeking foodstuff and minerals. After Japan occupied the southern half

of French Indochina in July 1940, the Allies emplaced a strict embargo cutting off 90 percent of their oil. Japan then made plans to go to war with the Allies to gain unhindered access to raw materials, especially the oil riches of the Dutch East Indies. The rest is history.

With the end of the Cold War, the old security relationships are not so secure anymore. The new world order has shifted international focus from deterrence and defense to economic reconstruction (in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union) and economic development (in the third World). The world sees healthy economies as the best way to improve quality of life. Rapid growth of economic interdependence has linked domestic and foreign policy together more closely than at any time in history.<sup>28</sup> Few nations are in a better position than Japan, with its large trade surplus, to deal with these economic problems. Even though Japan has had some recent economic setbacks, policy-makers around the world are putting pressure on Japan to do more.<sup>29</sup> As the leading trade surplus and creditor nation, Japan has the capacity to assume more global responsibilities. But world-wide economic prosperity cannot occur without international stability. As economic interdependence deepens, Japan's position on the world stage cannot help but grow.

Japan is moving aggressively into new markets; former communist countries with their bankrupt economies are looking to Japan to help in conversion to free market economies. At the same time, Japan sees opportunity to help itself in such areas as

Siberia, where vast energy resources lie undeveloped.<sup>30</sup> As their international trade web grows, there will eventually be a time when they will be required to directly protect their vital economic interests and, perhaps, the lives of Japanese citizens in an area of the world that has turned unfriendly. Eventually, some international event will trigger the use of military power, or the threat of its use, as all powerful nations have had to in their histories. Japan will not be able to depend solely on economic power, or its "checkbook diplomacy," in the not too distant future.

Economic power may be the primary element of power in the new world order, but it must be backed up with authority. This authority may be provided externally by an ally or internally by the state itself. As trade competition heats up as the main source of conflict between nations, self-interest will likely determine use of military power. For example, it is unlikely the United States would provide military support to Japan for property seized by a third world trading partner. Nations will have to be capable of projecting some military power themselves to defend their national interests. "Big brother" America or Russia are no longer available, and the United Nations also has limitations in conflict resolution. Japan's increased position in international economics will push Japan toward increasing its other pillars of power - political and military.

**Role in International community.**



Japan's desire to be a full-fledged member of the world community and more influential in political decisions is reflected by the rise of its membership in international institutions. It has been an important member of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Western Economic Summit. Japan also plays an influential role in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, where its capital share is second only to the United States.<sup>31</sup> In 1957, it became a founding member of the Group of Seven (G7) leading industrialized nations.<sup>32</sup>

Most notable is increased Japanese participation in international affairs through the United Nations (U.N.), where it views cooperation with the U.N. as a major element of its diplomacy.<sup>33</sup> Japan is the second largest financial contributor, paying 12.5 percent of the U.N. operating budget for 1992, second only to the U.S., which pays 25 percent.<sup>34</sup> Japan has assumed leadership on multilateral arms control and technology transfer restraints, proposing an international arms transfer registry be maintained by the U.N. This reflects Japan's concern about arms proliferation and takes a positive step towards conflict management. Japanese technical expertise in monitoring and surveillance of trade, which it already does for economic reasons, argues favorably for such a Japanese role.<sup>35</sup>

Along with these initiatives is Japan's long term goal of

having the "enemies" clause deleted from the U.N. Charter, accession to permanent membership on the Security Council, and participation of Japan's Self-Defense Force (SDF) in U.N peace-keeping operations. These latter two increase pressure on Japan to provide soldiers to the U.N., not just money. Japan is moving slowly toward assuming a more direct military role by the recent passage of the Peace-Keeping Operations (PKO) law following the Gulf War. The government of Japan was embarrassed by its inability to participate in the Gulf War after the Prime Minister had stated Japan would provide noncombatant aid. Although they generously donated \$13 billion to the cause and sent minesweepers to the Gulf after the war, Japan was still criticized for not participating sooner and with Japanese soldiers. Passage of the PKO law opened the way for an expanding role in peace-keeping with deployment of a Ground Self-Defense Force engineer battalion to Cambodia. In addition, Yasushi Akashi was made head of the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia, and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, is also Japanese. Japan's interest in taking a leadership role in resolving one of the Asia-Pacific regions most difficult challenges is another indication of their desire to play a more important role in the world community. Unfortunately, the Khmer Rouge are not cooperating, and efforts may prove futile.

Some of Japan's political leaders even say the noncombat peacekeeping participation in Cambodia is just the beginning, and that Japan's Self-Defense Force should eventually take part in

combat situations, though only under the auspices of the United Nations.<sup>36</sup> To even say such a thing a few years ago would have caused mass demonstrations in Tokyo.

Japan's foreign aid program, called Official Development Assistance, is ranked first in the world, supplying an impressive 22 percent of all funds flowing to developing countries in 1989.<sup>37</sup> As evidence of Japan's pursuit of political influence, it places certain political conditions on its economic aid policy. Four criteria are evaluated before aid is provided - level of military expenditure; potential for nuclear, biological and chemical weapons; arms trade; and democratization.<sup>38</sup>

The trend is clear that Japan has moved to assume a higher profile on international issues where it had previously chosen to remain largely detached. These areas include - arms control, disarmament, peacekeeping operations, security council issues/decisions, foreign aid, and international stability. Japan's participation in the political domain of international affairs is increasing, and along with that will come more pressure to participate militarily, as other nations do.

#### **Role in Europe.**

Japan's interest in Europe has primarily been economic, but has recently dovetailed into security concerns as well. The need for a politically stable Europe is inseparable from establishing viable economic interests. Japan has initiated participation in the activities of the European Community (EC) and the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Japan has "observership" status in NATO to keep informed of security developments in this area to a greater extent than has been the case in the past.<sup>39</sup> Japan and the EC are to hold regular consultative meetings on a wide range of issues, including security. The EC was reluctant to enter into discussions with Japan on security issues, but Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs insisted.<sup>40</sup>

As new markets open up in Eastern Europe, Japan has been collaborating on several industrial ventures with the newly emerging democracies. The Japanese already have struck several deals for joint production ventures in automobile and high technology industries with unified Germany.<sup>41</sup>

It appears Japan's strategy in Europe is to use economic leverage to gain access to European security affairs. This allows them to stay abreast of political events which may affect Japanese investments and to be on the inside of any trading block that may develop in Europe.

#### **Role in the Pacific.**

Japan is fully engaged economically and growing politically in Asia-Pacific affairs. Asian countries receive 60 percent of Japanese aid.<sup>42</sup> One reason for the investment is to ensure Japan's presence in burgeoning Asian markets and to hedge against slowing growth in demand in more mature markets in the West.<sup>43</sup>

In many parts of Asia, Japan has displaced the U.S. as a model for economic development. Japan's annual sales to Asia

have surpassed those to the U.S., and so has the rate of new investment. Japanese companies, already well represented throughout the region, have been positioning themselves to enter new markets in Vietnam, Cambodia and possibly Mongolia and the Russian Far East. Although this expansion is driven primarily by commercial concerns rather than political, Japanese policy-makers are now finding Asia a potential counterweight to the regional integration of the European and North American markets, where Japan has encountered hostility.<sup>44</sup> Asia is an area of possible U.S.-Japan contention due to both nation's economic interests in the area.

In January, 1993, Japan's Prime Minister made an unprecedented trip to Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand and Brunei to deepen policy dialogue with Southeast Asia. "Japan and these countries are becoming mature partners that think and act together."<sup>45</sup> As stated by Japan's Foreign Ministry, a new and uncertain world order requires greater initiative by Japan. There's a growing sense within the Japanese government that Japan should try to steer future events in its own neighborhood. In a survey of Japanese business leaders, 64 percent said Japan should shift its foreign policy emphasis toward Asia and away from the U.S.<sup>46</sup>

Of extreme interest is a recent speech delivered in Bangkok, where Prime Minister Miyazawa called for Asian and Pacific nations to "develop a long-term vision" for regional security, hinting that Asian countries may need to shoulder a greater

burden of maintaining their collective defense. Miyazawa made it clear that Tokyo intends to shed more of its post-World War II inhibitions about becoming involved in Asian security affairs. His speech was clearly aimed at consideration of some type of collective security arrangement in Asia that would include a continued military role for the U.S. Concern exists throughout Asia that budgetary pressures and the end of the Cold War could cause a U.S. troop withdrawal which might spark dangerous competition between Asian nations to fill the military power void.<sup>47</sup>

Japan's strategy in the Asia-Pacific area appears to be to increase its leadership role in regional security, by cautiously breaking new ground. Japan knows that the wounds inflicted on its neighbors during World War II have not yet healed, and it must move slowly in this area. Carefully opening dialogue about regional security is the first step in the process of establishing some type of coalition security arrangement in the region. In any case, the result will likely be an increased military role for Japan, no matter how distasteful to Japan's neighbors.

#### **U.S.-Japan Security Cooperation.**

The single most destabilizing event that could occur in the Asia-Pacific region is the rupture of the U.S.-Japan security relationship. Not only would this directly affect the security of Japan and degrade the strategic positioning of U.S. forces and

facilities in the area, but would have tremendous impact on Japanese domestic politics as well as on the regional stability perceptions of the other Asian nations.<sup>48</sup> Alterations in the U.S.-Japan security relationship would cause major repercussions throughout the region.

There are three main forces now at work which will likely cause substantial changes to the Mutual Security Treaty. They are: U.S. force reductions due to the end of the Cold War; tensions over burdensharing; trade friction.

#### **Reduction in U.S. presence.**

With the demise of the large Soviet threat and budgetary pressures to cash in on the "peace dividend," the U.S. is reducing its military presence overseas. Europe is bearing the brunt of reductions at well over 50 percent, while the Pacific theater is also impacted, but to a lesser extent. In the Pacific, the U.S. military has withdrawn all forces from its large bases in the Philippines, and reduced troop strength in South Korea by 7,000 in 1990 and 1991. Plans to bring another 6500 troops home from South Korea are temporarily delayed over concerns of North Korea's nuclear capability.<sup>49</sup> Long range plans for South Korea include further troop reductions and perhaps complete withdrawal if North-South unification is achieved.

In February 1990, U.S. Defense Secretary Cheney told Japanese officials that the U.S. will reduce its military presence in Japan by about 10 percent over the next two to three

years.<sup>50</sup>

So, with the Soviet threat that drew Japan and the U.S. together now gone, the strategic pillars upon which the Mutual Security Treaty rested have eroded. Americans are left wondering whether we need Japan's strategic location anymore, and the Japanese wonder whether the U.S. will be willing to come to Japan's defense in the future.<sup>51</sup> Japan will feel no need to arm itself if the U.S. continues to provide security. However, indications are that the U.S. is slowly disengaging from the Pacific and how far this will go is unknown, even to the U.S. government. As stated by the Japanese Ambassador to the United States, there is a fear U.S.-Japan relations could fall victim to a resurgence of American isolationism: "What we are concerned with is an America turning inward, politically and economically."<sup>52</sup> With the loss of U.S. military presence and the security of its nuclear umbrella, Japan's only alternative would be to grow an independent Japanese military and nuclear capability, as its neighbors have.

#### **Burdensharing.**

Although the rhetoric heard in the U.S. news media might indicate otherwise, the U.S. has been successful in getting Japan to assume a larger portion of its own defense and pay more for U.S. forces stationed in Japan. Responding to U.S. pressures for more defense spending Japan's defense budget grew faster than any other area of government spending in the 1980s, except foreign



aid. Defense research and development was consistently the fastest growing line item within the defense budget. Joint technological adventures and joint military exercises were also increased. The predictable result is that today Japan's largely defensive "war potential" is among the largest and most technologically sophisticated in the world.<sup>53</sup>

In the area of supporting American military presence in its country, Japan contributes over \$3 billion annually, far more than any other American ally ever contributed to the costs of stationing American troops on its soil.<sup>54</sup> The Japanese government pays half of the total cost of local national employees and under a recently signed agreement, the Government of Japan will, by 1995, assume the full cost of local national employees plus the cost of utilities used by U.S. forces.<sup>55</sup> Even with these concessions, the U.S. Congress periodically demands even more, with the threat of a withdrawal of U.S. forces if Japan does not comply.<sup>56</sup> These declarations, or threats, from the U.S. Congress and "Japan bashing" from the U.S. public cannot help but adversely impact on the U.S.-Japan relationship and will naturally push Japan toward military independence.

#### **Economic competition.**

Nowhere in the U.S.-Japan relationship do emotions run higher than in our trade competition. This is where "bashing" from both sides can be loudly heard, hurting prides and pulling us further apart.

In the U.S., negative sentiment toward Japan has risen principally due to a perception that Japan pursues self-interested, selfish policies without regard to the interests of others. Internationally, Japan hides behind its constitution to avoid participating in such crises as the Gulf War.<sup>57</sup> Most attention is focused on the large trade imbalance with Japan and charges that Japan plays by unfair rules in trade and business. Americans feel Japanese have been getting a free-ride for too long at U.S. expense. While the U.S. has been going into debt paying for world-wide security responsibilities, the Japanese have been able to focus their resources almost totally on economic growth.

In Japan, they believe Americans are making Japan the scapegoat for their own domestic economic troubles.<sup>58</sup> There is mounting frustration over "Japan bashing" by Americans.<sup>59</sup> Today's young Japanese, well fed and secure, do not remember the American occupation and help provided by the U.S. to a broken Japan. They have no special respect for the United States.<sup>60</sup> Adding to the fire is a statement made by Prime Minister Miyazawa that he expects the new Clinton administration to "blow a lot of hot air" on U.S.-Japan trade problems.<sup>61</sup> Shintoro Ishihara, who received international attention after writing The Japan That Can Say No, said, among other things, that "racial prejudice was behind the trade friction between our two countries," and constituted "the root cause of Japan-bashing."<sup>62</sup>

Perhaps more telling of trends in the relationship are the

results of two polls. In 1988, a McGraw Hill poll found 68 percent of Americans see Japan as a greater threat than the Soviet Union.<sup>63</sup> A more recent poll finds 47 percent of the respondents in Japan and 59 percent in the United States think ties between their nations are either "poor" or "bad."<sup>64</sup>

With this trend, days of the perceived "unequal" partnership are limited. The U.S. will be demanding changes to trade -- no longer allowing Japan's trade and cultural barriers to restrict access to its consumer and capital markets while allowing Japanese companies access to American markets. At the same time, Japan will be less inclined to automatically follow U.S. foreign policy in every area. Policies by both nations are diverging in Asia and Europe, which will cause future friction. For example, "hours after the U.S. presidential election in November, Japan broke with the Bush administration and resumed economic relations with Vietnam."<sup>65</sup>

Unless there is an improvement in attitudes and concrete progress made in resolving differences, trade and security disputes between the U.S. and Japan will continue to drive them apart. The only known fact is that Japan will remain America's most formidable long-term economic challenger and trading partner. Whether this evolves into a "win-win" relationship depends on the maturity of the political leadership of both countries. So far, the trend has been downward.

**Threats to security.**

Of all the pressures to militarize, the biggest reason would be the threat of being attacked. Although the probability of such an event is low in the near term, Japan does have three potential (and traditional) unfriendly neighbors: China, Russia and Korea. At the same time, all three also see Japan as a threat. A Beijing Review article in February 1992 warned that "Japan has become more active and independent in conducting its foreign policy in an attempt to fill the vacancy in the Asia-Pacific region left by the withdrawal of U.S. and Russian influences."<sup>66</sup> South Korean planners say that even after reunification, U.S. forces should stay in Korea to protect Korea from Japan.<sup>67</sup> Old animosities run deep in the region.

On the other hand, Japan sees nuclear proliferation activity on-going in Russia, China, and North Korea. It's latest Defense White Paper raised concerns about North Korea's purported development of new missiles that could hit Osaka, and about China's naval buildup.<sup>68</sup> Distrust and uncertainty about future security relationships is causing an arms race across Asia. The fact that Japan doesn't operate under a comprehensive regional security arrangement with these neighbors only adds to the problem. Conversely, if Japan were left out of any security alliance involving two of the other three, Japan would consider it an unacceptable shift in the balance of power. The major security issues with Japan and these three neighbors are addressed next.

## China.

China is modernizing its armed forces, and Japan is alarmed. The grand strategy of Japan calls for maintaining control of the seas around Japan's islands, dominating the land masses abutting this area of control, being the dominant naval power in the northwest Pacific, securing and maintaining control of access to Japan's mineral sources in Southwest and Southeast Asia and possessing defense capabilities commensurate with economic power.<sup>69</sup> Unfortunately, China is not cooperating.

The Peoples' Republic of China (PRC) was the first Asia-Pacific country to adopt a new approach to the post Cold War era by courting both Russian and Israel for access to advanced military hardware. A massive rearmament program is being undertaken by the People's Liberation Army.<sup>70</sup> The PRC's naval power is also growing, and especially troublesome to Japan was China's intent on purchasing a Ukrainian aircraft carrier. On September 9, 1992, Japanese advised the PRC against the purchase, warning that such an acquisition could destabilize the region.<sup>71</sup> In a stronger message, a former Japanese foreign minister said that Japan would cut economic aid if the PRC went ahead with the purchase.<sup>72</sup> The diplomatic pressure and economic leverage from Japan, in concert with other international efforts, appear to have stopped the acquisition process.

Japan also sees China's desire to increase its naval capability as being related to exertion of more influence in the South China Sea and northwest Pacific. In fact, Japan is

directly involved in a territorial dispute with China over the Senkaku Islands. This tiny chain, 120 miles northeast of Taiwan, is in an area thought to be rich in oil. It is claimed by China, Taiwan, and Japan. In 1990, Japan reasserted its sovereignty over the islands, provoking protests from both China and Taiwan. Early in 1992, China issued a law asserting its right to defend its claim over the islands by force.<sup>73</sup> If Japan gets into a shooting war with China over these small islands, Japan will be on its own militarily. It's not likely the U.S. would get involved in such a matter, unless it escalated.

Other PRC issues which may affect regional security is the imminent succession of power in China, the fate of Hong Kong, the evolution of the China-Taiwan relationship, and China's involvement in the proliferation of missile, and possibly nuclear, technology.

#### **Russia.**

The Japanese have traditionally regarded Russia as the primary threat to the nation. The Japanese archipelago stands between the Pacific Ocean and the Soviet Pacific Fleet bases at Vladivostok and Sovyetskaya Gavan. About 400 Russian warships pass through the Tsushima, Tsugaru and Soya straits each year.<sup>74</sup> Former Soviet Far East forces remain a formidable regional military presence, and Russia continues to modernize its strategic nuclear and much of its conventional forces, even as it reduces the numbers.<sup>75</sup>

The most direct security issue troubling their relationship is a territorial dispute over the Kurile Islands, which were gained by Russia's last-minute declaration of enmity with Japan at the end of World War II. Japan has tied a large economic aid package to the favorable resolution of this issue, but discussions have been stopped by Russia due to domestic pressures. Japan's use of their economic leverage in this case did not help them resolve the dispute. One also wonders whether Japan may be rethinking the wisdom of helping to strengthen a potential enemy.

#### **Korea.**

The deep seated distrust that exists between Japan and other Asian nations lies deepest in Korea. The brutal Japanese occupation from 1910 to 1945 is still vividly remembered by the Korean people and the continued discriminatory treatment of the Korean minority living in Japan gives credence to continuing distrust. Besides their historical and cultural differences, Japan's major concern is the threat that North Korea will develop nuclear weapons and possess the means to deliver them with missiles. The recently developed Rodong-1 has an 800 km range that could reach Japan.<sup>76</sup> Many believe a nuclear armed Korea would be totally unacceptable to Japan and would cause them to build their own nuclear weapons in response.<sup>77</sup> Other concerns are the impending succession of power in North Korea and the instability which may result from a unified North and South

Korea.

In sum, all the threats or potential threats described above give Japan reason to arm itself, especially if the United States lessens its presence in the Asia-Pacific theater and/or changes its resolve toward the U.S.-Japan alliance.

### **Nationalism.**

Although resurgence of nationalism has not occurred in Japan as some may have feared, it still lies below the surface, as it does in Germany and most societies. A movement in Japan could occur as in the Philippines, where the rise of nationalism was partially responsible for the eventual withdrawal of all U.S. forces from that country. The minority party in Japan has similar sentiments and would like to see U.S. forces reduced. This message appears regularly in the newspapers of Okinawa.

Japan is the most homogeneous nation in the world, and Japanese are proud of their history (minus the Second World War), traditions, and accomplishments. Imbedded national values and traditions could be revitalized, including anti-foreign sentiments.<sup>78</sup> Some of this nationalist feeling was captured in the book, The Japan That Can Say No, as previously referenced.

In recent discussions about the limiting impact of the Japanese constitution on a military buildup, a few Japanese, usually branded as right-wingers and ultra-nationalists, resent the fact that Japan is ruled by a document written by foreigners. Some argue that Japan should have an army like any other nation's



and others demand that the emperor be declared the head of state, not just its symbol as required by the postwar constitution.<sup>79</sup>

In any case, a major political movement to the right could cause Japan to speed rearmament to position itself "to go it alone," if need be.

### PRESSURES AGAINST MILITARIZATION

In this section, pressures against Japan arming itself will be presented and analyzed.

#### **Domestic resistance.**

Pacifist tendencies grew out of Japan's terrible experiences in World War II. Japanese citizens do not want to repeat the tragedies of that war ever again. The military does not get strong public support; anti-military resentment is fairly strong, especially anti-nuclear sentiment.

Recruiting is difficult; soldiers wear civilian clothes instead of uniforms on the street. The military has remained largely out of sight and out of mind. In a survey last year, only 10 percent of the Japanese surveyed said they would die for their country; in Spain, the next lowest, 47 percent said they would sacrifice their lives. In a Japanese government poll, only about a third of respondents said they would support the Self-Defense Force if Japan were invaded. Japanese flags are rarely seen in public, except on national holidays. Defense matters

don't warrant a cabinet-level position and top positions in the Defense Agency are held by civilians. Even though pay of military service is good, the Self-Defense Force is nearly 40,000 troops short of authorization.<sup>40</sup>

However, there is some evidence pacificism may be easing as the new generation comes more into prominence. According to Katsuya Kodama, a peace researcher at Mie University near Nagoya, peace activists are "isolated from the general public." A large anti-military rally in central Tokyo in October 1992 proved a flat, staged event where the audience - virtually all union members required by their leaders to attend - sat quietly, flipping through comic books or napping.<sup>41</sup> The new generation does not have the atrocities of World War II reinforced to them in their educational system like the German's do.

There are also those who do not want Japan involved in international affairs because political and military involvement abroad might undermine economic prosperity at home. A number of Japanese citizens prefer the status quo and don't want the government to "rock the boat" with too much involvement in foreign affairs. The belief is that trade reduces tensions and need for arms; aid and investments will give Japan the leverage it needs to influence regional and even international events.

#### **Constitutional and other "legal" restrictions.**

Japan's constitution, effective May 1947, was written in the aftermath of Japan's defeat in World War II. Article 9 of the

constitution specifically states that Japan renounces "forever" the use of war as a means of settling international disputes.<sup>82</sup> The only justification for Japan's military buildup is its right of self-defense, which every nation is "authorized" by the United Nations Charter. The Government of Japan ingeniously used the supremacy of the U.N. charter over its national constitution to gain consensus and justify arming itself for defensive purposes.

According to a recent article in the Wall Street journal, Japan will soon break a longstanding taboo by proposing a parliamentary review of the constitution, for the first time since its inception. The main focus will likely be a call to change the so-called peace provision restricting the dispatch of Japanese troops overseas. In recent years it has been criticized as a barrier to Japan's moving beyond "checkbook diplomacy" and meeting demands that it join in United Nations peacekeeping ventures.<sup>83</sup>

Pressure to reform the constitution has been building since last year when the Diet, after much debate, passed a bill allowing Japan to send ground troops to join U.N. peacekeeping operations in Cambodia. Many supporters of the move acknowledged that it violated Japan's constitution.<sup>84</sup>

Other laws which have limited military buildup in the past include the following: one percent of GNP spending cap; Japan's three non-nuclear principles (not possessing nuclear weapons, not producing them and not permitting their introduction into Japan); a prohibition against the sale of arms and arms production-

related equipment abroad; and a reluctance to even assist military activities in noncombatant ways, including logistics support, transportation, medical care and even the use of airfields and ports.<sup>85</sup>

#### **Socio-psychological mindset.**

There is a significant portion of the population that still sees Japan as a poor, vulnerable island nation not ready or capable of global responsibility. Japan is going through an agonizing process of redefining itself and, perhaps, finding itself. Since World War II, Japan has not wanted to take the lead in world affairs and has been more comfortable following others, especially the U.S. As stated by Japan's former Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan has the "foreign policy of a major power with an unassuming posture."<sup>86</sup> It has seldom tried to be a rule-maker in the world community. The rules were already there, and Japan simply tries to adapt to them and excel at playing the game.

Cultural aspects of Japanese society also interfere with decisive leadership. In Japan, consensus seeking is the predominate method of decision making. As anyone who has tried this method knows, it takes considerable time to get agreement. Japan's inability to come to consensus before the end of the Gulf War and its agonizing debates over the peacekeeping operation in Cambodia are recent examples.

Japanese business also emphasizes teamwork as more important

than leadership. In an informal survey of 1,000 businesspeople, Carnegie Mellon University professor Tobert Kelly found most American managers have attended three to five leadership seminars in recent years, while their Japanese counterparts received training in teamwork and "being a good employee."<sup>47</sup>

Japanese international leadership has not developed to the extent where Japan is ready to immediately assume a great amount of responsibility. However, as presented in previous sections, Japan is breaking new ground in the world community, albeit slowly and cautiously. Japan's future role in international politics will be hotly debated at home over the next few years, as a normal part of the Japanese consensus-seeking, decision-making process. Domestic consensus must be achieved before full blown engagement in international affairs can be achieved.

#### **International resistance.**

As mentioned repeatedly, the wounds of World War II run deep in the Asia-Pacific region, and there is fear that Japan "will rise again." Neighboring Asian states become extremely suspicious of Japan's political and military motives. Japan realizes the sensitivities that exist in the region and do not want to reverse years of patient diplomacy<sup>48</sup> and economic inroads into formerly unfriendly territory. Fear of a transition from economic influence to military dominance is real, and recent trends are of concern, i.e. Japan's building advanced jet fighters (FSX), high defense spending, mine sweepers to the Gulf,

a peacekeeping operations bill which allows the Japanese Self-Defense Force to go abroad for the first time since World War II, and the buildup of nuclear material. At the same time, Japan has shown reluctance to face up to its past colonization of Korea, invasion of China, domination over Southeast Asia and war crimes and has only made a feeble effort to educate its people about this history.<sup>89</sup>

The international community has been slow in allowing Japan full citizenship in other areas. Japan was not able to get elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations' Security Council in 1978, was barely able to in 1986 and got elected easily only in 1991.<sup>90</sup> There is considerable reluctance to introduce the question of permanent membership for Japan on the Security Council. Even the U.S., while publicly pushing for increased defense spending and capability by Japan, has privately expressed a desire to continue domination over a new, more assertive Japan.<sup>91</sup>

Others are concerned about Japan's ability to make decisions and respond quickly in a crisis. As mentioned in the previous section, a decentralized, consensus-seeking process of decision making brings into question its ability to handle new international responsibility. Even though three-fourths of Japan's oil comes from the Middle East, Japan was incapable of responding appropriately to this threat of a vital interest.<sup>92</sup> Politically, Japan has had a weak, divided, and scandal-ridden central leadership, with frequent changes of prime ministers and

the absence of visionary leaders for new times.<sup>93</sup>

Whether these views will be modified in the future as countries emulate the Japanese economic model and systems of financing, manufacturing, distribution, education, health care and pollution control<sup>94</sup> has yet to be seen. The infusion of Japanese capital and technology has been welcomed throughout Asia and will enhance communication in other areas. To make further progress Japan will also have to make adjustments to its political processes (especially involving crisis response), absolve themselves of past transgressions to the satisfaction of its Asian neighbors, and gain public support for a greater international role. Otherwise, any increase in military capability by Japan will be unacceptable to the region and viewed as destabilizing, with the resultant reaction of causing a major arms race.

#### **Normalization of relationships in the region.**

A growing network of ties among and between Asian states could reduce efforts by Japan to rearm. Japan's participation in a multilateral security web could encourage good citizenship and serve as a safety check on Japan's military capabilities. Japan's membership in subregional security structures would arguably open new avenues to shared security goals and ease the political strain of relying exclusively on the bilateral U.S.-Japan alliance. Japan obviously recognizes such potential benefits through its participation in ASEAN Post-Ministerial

Conferences, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, and by recent overtures from Prime Minister Miyazawa to open discussions on regional security - the first such attempt by Japan in over 50 years.

Peaceful resolution of disputes through regional cooperation would go a long way toward lessening the need to militarize. Analysts will be closely watching key events unfold, such as the Cambodia issue, Kurile and Spratly Islands, North-South Korea unification, etc. Some "confidence building" measures are ongoing now to improve relationships and cooperation. The Japan Self-Defense Force and Republic of Korea Armed Forces now have exchange programs of officers to military schools and conduct an exchange of views on security issues.<sup>95</sup>

#### **ANALYSIS/SUMMARY**

Japan is in transition; a situation forced upon it by a changed world. The end of the Cold War has made Japan's environment potentially more insecure. Japan can no longer continue the status quo and is now in the process of redefining its role in the world community. The information presented in this study identifies trends in Japan's security posture and allows for some predictions.

Japan's Self-Defense Force has significant capability. Although small in manpower, it is supported with the world's third largest military budget. The SDF is well equipped with the



latest hardware, and modernization, along with the defense budget, will continue to increase at a steady pace. Japan has clearly stated it will continue its military buildup because of the politically volatile situation in Asia. With the perceived power vacuum left by the Soviet collapse as well as a shrinking U.S. presence, the larger regional states, such as China, are expanding their influence. The result will be a Japan which is armed with a strong, high tech, professional military "core" upon which it can rapidly expand, if required by the actions (or perceived threats) of other regional states.

Japan's colossal manufacturing sector has the capability and capacity to support a rapid buildup of the armed forces. With its many dual-use technologies, industries have the "know how" to build state-of-the-art equipment in large quantities.

Internationally, as Japan's economic clout has increased, a clamor for more aid and "human" contributions to global security can be heard. External forces are pushing Japan towards assuming a greater role in world affairs, and Japan is accepting responsibility in the areas of foreign aid, non-proliferation of weapons and technology, arms reductions, environmental awareness, and peacekeeping operations. Evidence of Japan's increasing interest in foreign affairs includes its desire to be on the United Nations Security Council, passing of a bill which allows deployment of the SDF overseas for peacekeeping operations, involvement in the Cambodian issue, and the unprecedented initiative to review its constitution with a view toward

loosening the restrictions on the use of military capability. Japan seems to realize it can no longer just sit back and avoid involvement. Not all disputes affecting a country's interests can be resolved economically or diplomatically. As the world becomes more economically interdependent and trade friction increases, Japan will have to back up its interests with political and military authority. Of course, Japan prefers to work political issues and disputes through international organizations such as the U.N., and draws its military strength from the U.S.-Japan alliance. In the future, neither of these two modus operandi can be fully depended upon.

At the center of Japan's debate about its future is the U.S.-Japan security relationship. With the demise of the communist block and the Soviet threat, the glue that binds this symbiotic relationship has disappeared. The U.S. is under pressure to reduce its armed forces around the world, increase burdensharing, and improve its trade balance with Japan. Japan will try to retain U.S. military presence for as long as possible, to include significant increases in burdensharing as incentive. The positive effect on regional stability by the presence of U.S. forces is priceless to Japan, and desired almost unanimously by other Asian countries. However, the relationship will change into a less dependent and much broader structure of cooperation. Eventually it will be a mature relationship of equals, where the U.S. cannot take Japan's lock-step support for granted and Japan cannot claim it's a poor country needing

special treatment in trade and protection from security responsibilities. This inevitable change will be healthy if viewed for what it is -- an evolving relationship from dependency to interdependence and respect as international partners, similar in structure to America's relationship with Britain. If this concept sounds alien, it shows we have a long way to go.

As a hedge against a changed and less potent U.S.-Japan security relationship, Japan will not only increase its own military capability at a moderate pace, but will also try to extend security cooperation throughout the Asia-Pacific region. It would be in Japan's interest to be a leader in a regional security coalition to enhance the possibility of conflict resolution through peaceful diplomacy. Admittedly, many fences will have to be mended first and confidence building measures substantially increased to build the necessary trust that must accompany such an organization. Japan must initiate action in this sensitive area by making amends (starting with a formal apology) for its aggressive, brutal behavior as an occupying force in Asia during the 1930s and 1940s.

Japan's current trend is clearly toward a slow, cautious non-threatening expansion of its military capabilities. However, it would be a mistake not to consider the possibility of a more dramatic change, caused by a direct threat to Japan's sovereignty. Such a threat to Japan's survival as a nation would trigger a drastic change in Japan's strategic direction. Such an event would stimulate a rapid military buildup, to include

nuclear. Adding the "will of the people" to its economic and industrial might could release an unprecedented buildup of military strength, thus quickly pushing Japan to superpower status. Although such a scenario is not probable, or even conceivable in the short run, it could happen in the long, long term with a resurgent Russia, China or Korea. Given that this may happen far in the future, Japan will likely be ready anyway, given its present rate of defense growth.

### CONCLUSION

So, will Japan become a military superpower? No, it won't, unless some unforeseen international crisis of the most extreme nature were to erupt and directly threaten Japan's existence over a period of time. It will not have the size, global power projection capability, or nuclear weapons to make it a superpower.

Will Japan become a major military power? Yes, it will. It is steadily growing and moving in this direction now, but it will avoid using its military power internationally as long as possible. The Japanese people (and their neighbors) will accept use of the SDF only under the auspices of the United Nations or some other multilateral, regional authority. Japan will need more capability in the future as its international interests grow and dependence on the U.S.-Japan security alliance decreases.

When Japan becomes a major military power, will that be bad?

No, it will be good, under certain conditions. The conditions are: 1) Japan remains democratic and thereby sensitive to domestic opinion, 2) civilian leadership is firmly in charge, 3) Japan is responsive to the fears of its Asian neighbors, and 4) Japan's forces become part of a larger regional security association which includes the United States. Development of an Asia-Pacific security association seems inevitable, but will evolve very, very slowly. Under these circumstances, buildup of Japan's military could enhance regional security.

Will Japan's increase in military power and participation in international affairs be a threat to the U.S.? No, it can enhance our position by relieving the U.S. of some of the resourcing and manpower burden it currently carries. The U.S.-Japan relationship can mature into a fuller global partnership. Inclusion of Japan into the world community of nations will also alleviate much of the psychological fear Japanese have of being isolated, victims of regional or international developments, and not in control of their environment and destiny. A healthy, secure Japan will add strength and stability to the international community of nations.

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